

Ceaseless Reform Cabinet —
Analysis of the Rhetorical Artifact —
The Prime Minister Koizumi's First Official Statement of
April 26, 2001

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This study analyzed prime minister Koizumi's first official statement of April 26, 2001 by using neo-Aristotelian criticism. First, the context, in which the statement was presented, was reconstructed. Secondly, the rhetorical artifact itself was analyzed using the five canons of rhetoric: invention, organization, style, delivery, and memory. Last, the effects and the influences of Koizumi's rhetoric for the audience in Japan at that time were assessed.

***Rhetorical Criticism *Political Communication *Speech Analysis**

1. Introduction

A politician held the spotlight in Japan in 2001. The name of the politician was Junichiro Koizumi. At that time Koizumi, the new prime minister of Japan, was heavily covered in newspapers and TV news every day and night in 2001. Koizumi's catchy slogans and his image as a brave reformer were widely broadcasted, and they fascinated Japanese people. In May 2001, a survey researched by Asahi newspaper revealed that 84% of the Japanese people approved Koizumi Cabinet (Asahisoken Report, 2002). On the other hand, the approval ratings for the predecessor, prime minister Mori, plunged below 20 percent and the disapproval ratings exceeded 80 percent in February 2001 (Tada, 2001). The more than 80% approval rating for prime minister was the unprecedented phenomenon in Japan. This paper analyzes the artifacts of Koizumi's first official statement of April 26, 2001 when Koizumi was well received by the press, and the people's positive expectations for Koizumi were at a peak. By adopting neo-Aristotelian criticism, the effects and the influences of Koizumi's rhetoric in the context in April 2001 are investigated. First, the context in which the statement was given is reconstructed. Second, the nature and function

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of Koizumi's rhetoric are analyzed using the five canons of neo-Aristotelian criticism. Last, an assessment of the effects of this rhetoric is provided.

In this study, the term "rhetor" is defined as "an individual engaged in creating or presenting rhetorical discourse" (Herrick, 2002). The term "artifact" refers to the manuscript of Koizumi's speech. The speech manuscript announced on April 26, 2001 was collected from the Internet official home page of Office of the Cabinet Public Relations, Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet. The artifact hence refers to the sample speech cited from the homepage of official government of Japan. To describe the audience and the social contextual aspects of Koizumi's speech, the term "recent Japanese contexts" was defined as the ten-year period from 1991-2001.

2. Context

It is important to reconstruct the context of rhetorical artifacts in terms of current Japanese attitudes toward national politics and the recent socio-political context in Japan. Using these two areas, the social and psychological situation of the audience can be described.

2.1 Current Japanese Attitudes Toward National Politics

The distrust of Japanese people in the national politics topped in February 2001. In early February, the "approval ratings for the Mori Cabinet plunged below 20 percent and disapproval ratings have topped at 80 percent" (Tada, 2001). There is a background of the distrust for politics, especially the distrust for the Mori administration. On February 10th, a Japanese fisheries training ship sank off Honolulu, because of a collision with a U. S. nuclear submarine. At that time Mori was playing golf in a Tokyo suburb, and Mori "continued to play after he was informed of the disaster, and did not return to the prime minister's official residence for four hours. This stirred extreme public anger, and public-approval ratings for the Mori administration in mid-February fell to less than 10 percent" (Uchida, 2001). Additionally, the accident of Mori's slip of the tongue had a part in the disapproval of rating. Mori said that Japan is "a country of gods centering on the

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Emperor,” an anachronistic view supported by pre-war rightists. Japanese people were angered about Mori’s slip that prompted the re-emergence of rightist forces (Tada, 2001).

The Japanese pessimistic attitude toward national politics might have emerged due to the lack of trust, disappointment, and the anger toward incompetent predecessors and their scandals. It should be stressed that Koizumi was inaugurated prime minister after the Mori administration, and there was a necessity to make a breakthrough the negative attitudes toward national politics and fulfill the public expectations for some changes.

2.2 Recent Socio-political Context in Japan

What needs to be emphasized is that the audience of Koizumi’s speeches lacked confidence and lost trust in politics. The “complacency” among Japanese people during Bubble-economy turned out into a “lack of confidence” and a “fear for the future.” These are the two major characteristics in Japanese socio-cultural context recently. The Japanese socio-political context tremendously changed after the bubble-economy ended.

There has been much soul-searching among the Japanese in recent years, following the collapse of the bubble economy and the recession it triggered. Economic woes aside, a crisis of confidence exists at the most fundamental level. People have come to doubt not only the ability of society as a whole, but also their own individual abilities. Even as we head into the 21st century, there is widespread fear that Japan is falling behind, that the new millennium will present challenges that we will be unable to cope with. The future is bleak (Terashima, 1999).

The fear for the future and the lack of confidence are widespread in Japanese society. What is worse, a series of bribery scandals also decreased the people’s trust in the politics and society because the ethical paralysis stood out after the bubble. Thus, people had high expectations for the Cabinet of Koizumi in 2001.

2.3 Significance of the First Prime Minister's Official Statement

The first official statement on April 26, 2001 was important because Koizumi was required to meet the expectations of the people. He also had a responsibility to explain his policies and provide guidelines for the future of Japan, especially given the nation's recent difficult time. In addition to situational significance, the first official statement on April 26 was rhetorically important because the statement set forth policy. A policy speech provides representative artifacts and shows whether or not rhetorical strategies are used skillfully. As Busby & Majors (1987) note, a policy speech is a persuasive speech so that "its purpose is to convince the audience of the need to implement the policies advocated by the speaker. This is done by influencing the audience's attitudes, opinion, beliefs, values, and behaviors through the use of various rhetorical strategies" (Busby & Majors 1987, cited from Coltman 1991). Though the first official statement on April 26 is not considered a historically great speech, selecting this policy speech as the object of the analysis is meaningful in order to investigate how Koizumi tried to influence the audience's values, behaviors, attitudes, and opinion in times of national difficulties. It seems evident that studying political speeches and analyzing particular rhetorical artifacts deeply are important tasks of communication scholars. Such analysis may provide a basis for allowing society to critically evaluate recent Japanese political communication.

3. Methodology

For the present study, the neo-Aristotelian criticism as explained and defined by Foss (1996) was used as the primary methodology for analyzing the artifacts. In this section, procedures for analysis are introduced. Operationalization of this method with its analytical focus is then presented.

3.1 Procedures of Neo-Aristotelian Criticism

Foss (1996) has stated that there are three major tasks in the utilizing the procedures of neo-Aristotelian criticism : (1) reconstructing the context in which the rhetorical artifact occurred ; (2) analyzing the rhetorical artifact itself ; and (3)

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assessing the impact of the artifact on the audience in light of the various options available to the rhetor. I adopt these procedures in order to analyze the wholeness of the artifact using the five canons of rhetoric. The five canons are:(1) invention, the location and creation of ideas and materials for the speech ; (2) organization, the structure or argument of the speech ; (3) style, the language of the speech ; (4) delivery, management of the voice and gestures in the presentation of the speech ; and (5) memory (mastery of the subject matter), which may include the actual memorizing of the speech. Finally, the critic assesses the effects and the influences of the rhetoric.

3.2 Relevance of Methodology

Neo-Aristotelian criticism is relevant to analyze a particular speech as well as the whole process of speechmaking. Thus, adopting neo-Aristotelian criticism in this study seems most reasonable because this research focuses on one particular speech and analyzes rhetorical artifacts closely. Based on the five canons of rhetoric (invention, organization, style, delivery, and memory), Wichelns (1925, cited from Foss 1996) noted that neo-Aristotelian criticism covers

the speaker's personality, the public character of the speaker or the public's perception of the speaker, the audience, the major ideas presented in the speech, the motives to which the speaker appealed, the nature of the speaker's proof, the speaker's judgment of human nature in the audience, the arrangement of the speech, the speaker's expression, the speaker's method of speech preparation, the manner of delivery, and the effect of the discourse on the immediate audience and its long-term effects. (wichelns 1925, cited from Foss 1996)

As Wichelns indicates, neo-Aristotelian criticism is superior for analyzing the single artifact relative to the whole process of speechmaking. In using neo-Aristotelian criticism in this study the first official statement on April 26 can be analyzed inclusively.

Besides the relevance of the methodology mentioned above, neo-

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Aristotelian criticism also involves pedagogical instruction. Since neo-Aristotelian criticism covers and analyzes the whole process of speechmaking, this allows readers to consider what makes a good speech, how a good speech is constructed, how political speech is invented and organized, and what elements contribute to effective delivery. In addition, readers are also shown the importance of audience adaptation by considering the effect of speech as seen in the responses of audiences. Thus, the use of neo-Aristotelian criticism is seemed quite appropriate for this study.

3.3 Operationalization

The analytical focus of artifacts are summarized and shown on Table 1.

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Table 1. Summary of Methodology : Neo-Aristotelian Criticism based on Foss (1996)

Procedures of Neo-Aristotelian Criticism		
Cannons of Rhetoric	Subcategories	Analytical Focuses of the Artifacts
1. Invention	1. <i>logos</i> (Logical Argument)	1. Discovering the rhetor's use of logical appeals. 2. Analyzing how the thesis is developed and supported.
	2. <i>ethos</i> (Credibility)	1. Discovering moral character or integrity, demonstrated through linking the message and rhetor with what the audience considers virtuous. 2. Evaluating intelligence, demonstrated through a display of common sense, good taste, and familiarity with current topics and interests. 3. Evaluating good will, or the establishment of rapport with the audience. (Good will is created through identification of the rhetor with the listeners, straightforwardness, and praise of the audience.)
	3. <i>pathos</i> , (Emotional Appeal)	1. Investigating appeals designed to generate emotions in the audience. 2. Discovering what emotions were generated by the speech - perhaps fear or shame - and how these emotions put the listeners in a frame of mind so they will react favorably to the rhetor's purpose.

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Procedures of Neo-Aristotelian Criticism	
Cannons of Rhetoric	Analytical Focuses of the Artifacts
2. Organization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyzing arrangement of the structure of the rhetoric. 2. Determining the general pattern of argument adapted for the rhetoric. (e.g., chronological order, problem-solution order, emphasized parts) 3. Assessing the results of the arrangement of the discourse in its entirety and wants to know if the organization of the speech is consistent with the subject and purpose of the discourse and is appropriate for the audience.
3. Style	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessing how particular kinds of words or other symbols are used by the rhetor to create varying effects and how the symbols are arranged to form larger units such sentences 2. Examining whether the language style contributes to the accomplishment of the rhetor's goal—assists in the development of the thesis, facilitates the communication of ideas, and thus helps to create the intended response.
4. Delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigates the influence of delivery on the success of the rhetorical artifact. 2. Assessing the vocal skill of the rhetor (articulation, pronunciation, rate of speech, and pitch contributed to the audience's acceptance of the message). 3. Assessing the bodily action of the rhetor (posture, movement, gesture, and eye contact, as well as how the appearance and physical characteristics of the rhetor affected the audience).

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Procedures of Neo-Aristotelian Criticism	
Cannons of Rhetoric	Analytical Focuses of the Artifacts
5. Memory	—Investigating the rhetor’s control of the materials of the rhetorical artifact, their relation of memory to the mode of presentation selected, and methods for improving memory. ☺

4. Analysis of Koizumi’s Rhetoric

The artifact of the statement was analyzed by adopting the five canons of rhetoric:(1) invention, (2) organization, (3) style, (4) delivery, and (5) memory.

4.1 Invention

Major findings of the analysis indicate that the “reform,” which Koizumi tried to realize, played an important role in creating the ethos and pathos of his statement. From start to finish, Koizumi talked about reform as his main topic. Reform is a symbolic word and concept for the audience because the audience of Koizumi’s speech seemed willing to change the society. For example, in the first sentence of the body, Koizumi affirmed that “The top priority for this Cabinet is to revive the Japanese economy.” This is the exact policy that Japanese people wanted to hear from their national politicians. The audience must have felt comfortable to hear such statements and had high expectations for the Cabinet of Koizumi. In another instance, Koizumi stated, “In order to restore the faith of the people in politics, I am resolved to make this Cabinet the ‘Ceaseless Reform Cabinet’.” This was also an appropriate statement for the audience, because Japanese people had a pessimistic attitude toward national politics due to a lack of trust. They were disappointed in what they saw as incompetent predecessors and their scandals. Using the phrase “Ceaseless Reform Cabinet (kaikaku danko naikaku),” which meant that realizing reform whatever the cost, was impressive for the audience, and it gave a positive impression of Koizumi as a new powerful leader. Overall, Koizumi’s statement must have been relevant for the audience at

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that time. Koizumi tried to establish his *ethos* and *pathos* by presenting ideal policies for his audience. Koizumi, therefore, was able to gain strong support from the audience.

In terms of *logos*, the statement was nothing but a list of ideal policies. There was no detailed expression of his reform (e.g., presenting a specific numerical target for improving the GDP, a schedule for the reform plan, or procedures for realizing structural reform, etc.). However, when this statement presented, the audience seemed to blindly support Koizumi ; Japanese people were excited as the more than 80-90% support rating indicated. The audience appeared to be unable to find any failure or insufficiency in this construction of *logos*. Koizumi thus succeeded in removing the responsibility of explaining logical support and detailed procedures for how he planned to realize economic revival and political structural reform. It can be said that Koizumi tended to employ *ethos* and *pathos* rather than establishing *logos*.

4.2 Organization

Organization of Koizumi's statement followed a basic speech style : introduction, body, and conclusion. In the introduction, Koizumi explained the grave responsibility in becoming a Prime Minister of Japan. Koizumi also talked about the resolution of his cabinet using catchy slogans. In the body section, Koizumi presented the top priority for his cabinet : economic rebirth, education reform, and diplomatic front. Last, in conclusion, Koizumi asked people to trust politics and to understand and cooperate with the cabinet. The rhetorical structure of the statement is shown on Table 2.

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**Table 2 : Rhetorical Structure of the First Official Statement of
Prime Minister Koizumi**

INTRODUCTION

Assume responsibility

Emphasize coalition with the New Komeito and the New Conservative Party

Assert leadership

Express resolution (“Ceaseless Reform Cabinet,” “without structural reform there
can be no economic recovery”)

BODY

Express the top priority for the Cabinet

• Economy

Revive the Japanese economy.

Ensure that there is a revival in our financial and industrial sectors

Implement the recently announced Emergency Economic Package

Stimulate new industries and expand employment opportunities

Promote greater investment in research and development of advanced science
and technology

Implement administrative reform

• Education

Reform education

Cultivate people who are aware of and take pride in our nation’s traditions and
culture

• Diplomatic front

Enhance Japan’s good relations with its Asian neighbors

Demonstrate international leadership

CONCLUSION

Assert leadership

Explain, “Achieving economic recovery through structural reform will involve pain”

Put into practice “politics of trust”

Ask for understanding and cooperation

4.3 Style

Koizumi used short, simple, and assertive statements. The ending of the sentences especially gave an assertive impression. Expressions such as “-to suru *ketsui desu*” or “-ni torikumimasu” are rather assertive. These expressions emphasized Koizumi’s resolution for economic rebirth and structural reform. Japanese politicians often prevaricate by using vague expressions such as “-no yodesu” or “-to omoimasu.” Koizumi, however, used assertive statements and clear expressions. As Sakura (2001), an assistant professor of science technology at Tokyo University stated, the characteristics of Koizumi’s rhetoric were “intelligible” (*wakariyasusa*) and “plain” (*kanketsusa*). The style of Koizumi’s rhetoric seemed to be appropriate, and it functioned to deliver his message effectively.

4.4 Delivery

Previous articles have that discussed Koizumi’s delivery in his statement of April 26. Based on these works, a general criticism of the delivery of Koizumi may be made. Koizumi’s delivery, on the whole, was considered appropriate. For example, Yoshida (2001), an analyst for Yomiuri Newspaper, said that the source of Koizumi’s popularity was the “political power of rhetoric (*Kotobano-seijiryoku*).” Yoshida also stated that Koizumi had crisp and clear statements (*Hagireyoihatsugen*) and so gained high popularity among Japanese people. According to a serial article (*Yomiuri-shinbun*, 2001) concerning the “ways of Koizumi’s (*Koizumi-ryu*),” conversational delivery, informal speaking for the public, was effective giving a friendly image.

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In the context of the statement on April 26, it is not absolutely evident that Koizumi used conversational delivery considering the situation and the rhetorical artifact. However, the audience seemed to have generally positive impressions about his delivery.

4.5 Memory

Foss (1996) has stated that few speeches are memorized today, and it is difficult to say that Koizumi memorized the whole manuscript of his statement. However, it does seem apparent that the manuscript of the statement was well prepared in advance. This was the first official statement, and Koizumi knew that his statement would get special attention from the press. Overall, the statement consisted of rather simple and short sentences. Memorizing a manuscript is not a hard task. However, it was difficult to specifically assess cues that would indicate memorization in this study due to the lack of original audio material.

5. Assessment of General Effects

In terms of the effects of the statement, Koizumi's rhetoric appears to have been successful. Considering his situation, the purposes of the speech were to explain the basic policies and to gain the support of the audience for the Koizumi Cabinet. It seems that Koizumi achieved his purposes in the statement. Koizumi used assertive statements, and his statements were valued. Koizumi's speeches seemed plain and intelligible for the audience. Moreover, Koizumi was quite successful in obtaining the empathy of the audience by using the ideal image of "reform," an image that Japanese people shared.

The expressions, "Ceaseless Reform Cabinet," and "without structural reform there can be no economic recovery," were catchy slogans referring to Koizumi's reform policy. Koizumi emphasized the significance of structural reform by using the slogan "without structural reform there can be no economic recovery." This slogan functioned effectively to attract Japanese people because people had been wanting economic rebirth since the end of bubble-economy.

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Another, “the process of achieving economic recovery through structural reform will involve pain,” expresses directly that negativity will be a part of future problems that Japanese people face. As Sakuragi (1992) stated, Japanese people tend to distinguish *honne* “spoken gesture” and *tatemae* “true feeling” in a public situation. In order to prevent confrontation and keep harmony, Japanese politicians may express opinions ambivalently and used indirect strategies in order to avoid arguments with others. Koizumi’s simple and direct statements fascinated the audience and functioned effectively in the context of Japanese society. The audience thus perceived that Koizumi was “new” and “different.” More importantly, perhaps, Koizumi’s assertive and direct statements were very impressive and comfortable for Japanese people because they had a lack of confidence and seemed to be fearful for the future. Koizumi succeeded in portraying himself as a brave reformer. Consequently, his catchy statements were heard by people almost daily in the mass media and were thus used as popular slogans throughout Japanese society in 2001.

Koizumi stated that the structural reform project was of greatest importance. This “reform” was the symbolic idea or fantasy of the audience at that time. Koizumi tried to respond to audience expectation, and he attempted to construct rapport with the audience. Koizumi’s rhetoric was thus suited to the social context of Japan. Koizumi established not only *ethos* but also *logos* (logical argument). Overall, it can be said that Koizumi spoke a language of the people, and it was successful in reaching the Japan of the times.

6. Conclusion

There may be methodological limitations in analyzing rhetorical artifacts in modern political communication. Though neo-Aristotelian criticism involves the advantage of analyzing an artifact inclusively, the five canons of rhetoric may not always be most appropriate for analysis of today’s rhetoric. As mentioned earlier, Foss (1996) noted that few speeches are memorized nowadays. The rise of media technology has led to reliance on a TelePrompTer rather than personal memory.

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Thus, it seems reasonable to ask whether or not memory is necessary as a criterion of analysis.

If the effect of speech is focused, other factors such as media strategies also need to be included in the analytical focus. Jamieson (1988) stated that recent political ads “expect to deliver political information in twenty-, thirty-, or sixty-second bites.” Thus, it seems evident that invention, organization, and style of the modern artifact have changed since ancient Greek and Roman times. Neo-Aristotelian criticism seems to need some modifications if it is to be applied to the analysis of modern political rhetoric. Thus, we should be conscious of both the advantages and disadvantages of using neo-Aristotelian criticism as a methodology in future studies.

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